

## "RAMBLING ROBIN."

BY JAMES DAVENPORT.

People called him "Rambling Robin." You could have seen him almost any day walking along with his head hanging down, and his eyes fixed on the ground. Nobody spoke to him, nor did he speak to anybody. His clothes were in rags. He wore no collar. Sometimes a red scarf was fastened round his neck, but oftener than not his neck and chest were bare to the cutting winds. Nobody knew where he came from, and nobody cared.

Some said he had been an actor at one time—others that he had been a doctor, whilst many maintained that he was a man who had gambled away a large fortune. Whatever he might have been, we could all see that he was no common vagrant.

I do not know whether the peace and good will which are supposed to come to all men at Christmas-time had anything to do with it, but when I passed him one Christmas Eve a few years ago, as I was hurrying off home, a sudden impulse led me to stop.

"Will you come home with me and have your supper, Robin?" I said.

He stopped and lifted up his head. Poor fellow! I noticed the tears spring to his eyes. Kind words were strangers to him.

"My—my supper!" he gasped. "I never have any supper."

I quite believed him. In fact, if he had said he never had anything to eat at any time, I should not have contradicted him.

"But make an exception to-night," I urged. "Christmas-time, you know. People break the ordinary routine of their lives at Christmas. Come along."

He made no answer; at least, not with words, but his eyes spoke plainly enough, and, quickening his pace, we strode along together towards my home.

At last we reached the house, and my wife opened the door. My little Mabel came toddling to meet me, and as I lifted her up and carried her back on my shoulder, I told my wife I had brought a friend home for supper.

Robin and I sat talking together whilst Annie was getting the meal ready. His face had brightened, and his brilliant conversation confirmed the opinion I had formed of him, that he was a man of culture.

Mabel climbed down from my knee, and went across to Robin.

"Have oo no 'little dir!'?" she lisped.

He stroked her hair gently, and shook his head.

"And no mamma?" she asked, looking first at me, and then at the smiling face of my wife.

Robin turned his face away. Trust a child for finding the way to a man's heart.

"No, no mamma," he replied, after a pause.

Mabel sighed, and came across to me. "Is 'ee poor man?" she asked.

The intervention of my wife with the information that supper was ready saved me from replying.

The meal over, my wife rose to take Mabel to bed, but before she left the room the little girl ran back, and climbing on Robin's knee, kissed him "Dood night." Then Robin and I pulled our chairs to the fire. His eyes were shining. He seemed a different man. I handed him a cigar, and we sat smoking for awhile without speaking.

"Would you like to hear the history of 'Rambling Robin'?" he asked, bending forward. "If you would, I will tell you the first part. The second part only begins to-night. . . . You shall hear that in a year or two."

I did not quite understand him, but I nodded and waited for him to start.

"Two lines," he began, "frequently occur to me. You remember them:

'Who falls from all he knows of bliss,  
Cares little into what abyss.'  
They are the truest lines ever written," he said, and he stared into the fire for a time without speaking.

"Listen, and I will tell you how I fell. Five years ago I was a young man. Do I look young now?" and he pointed to his sunken cheeks and gray-streaked hair. "And yet five years have made the difference."

"My name is Robin Alerne. I was living with my father in Scotland, and it was there I met my Flora. I can see her now, as she was the day I first met her. It was a glorious day in June. I had sauntered out with my rod in the morning, and was whipping the stream which ran along the outskirts of the wood, when the sound of sweet music fell on my ear. I turned round, and saw a woman. She had not seen me, and as she came along she sang in a voice as sweet and pure as was the singer:

'Her face is fair, her heart is true,  
As spotless as she's bonnie, O!  
The opening gowan, wet wi' dew,  
Nae purer is than Nannie, O!'

"She was slinging her sun-bonnet in her hand, and the sun was playing with her golden hair. Her neck was bare, its whiteness contrasting with her bonnie, sunburnt face.

"When she saw me she stopped and blushed. Then she threw on her bonnet, and walked on hurriedly.

"She was a girl from the neighboring farm. I fell in love with her, and we met in the wood, unknown to anyone. Then my father heard. He forbade me to see her, and told me if I disobeyed him he would turn me from the house.

"I met Flora the same night, and persuaded her, on that glorious moon-

light night, to be my wife. We came south together, and I married her. I was successful in obtaining a clerkship, and after my work at the office was done, my wife would sit in the little chair by my side, whilst I sat writing at my desk. For I had the gift of writing bits of stories, and often when the night had drawn on, and work was put away, Flora and I would sit talking of the future, of the day when I should be a famous author, and the drudgery of the office should be a thing of the past.

"But our happiness was too great to last. The roses on my darling's face began to fade, and, though she tried to smile away my fears, I felt sure she was going to be ill.

"Then one night when I came from the office I found her ill in bed. In despair I sat down to write a story, which, if accepted, would enable me to get her away into the country, or to the seaside. I worked at it all night, and finished it. Then a week later I received a letter at the office from the editor telling me that my story had been accepted, inclosing a check, and asking for more stories.

"Flora had been growing worse each day, but now, I thought, she should soon be better. I cashed the check and bought some luxuries for her, and, passing a flower-shop, I went in and obtained a spray of lilies. They were her favorite flowers.

"Then I hurried away home. I could hardly walk fast enough, but at last I reached my little house, and entered. I ran upstairs, and threw open her bedroom door.

"'Flora,' I cried. 'Success at last, my darling. You shall go away for a few days now.'

"She did not answer me. 'She must be asleep,' I thought, and noiselessly I walked across the room.

"I stood over the bed, looking at my sweetheart's lovely face. It was so calm, so beautiful, so pure. There was a sweet smile on her lips, and her hair was hanging down, framing her face in gold. My thoughts wandered back to that day in June, and the words of that song came back to me.

"I knelt at the side of the bed, and, placing the spray of lilies in my Flora's little hand, waited in silence, watching and praying—praying that she would soon be restored to health again.

"She awoke with a little start.

"'I am so glad you have come, Robin,' she said, as I kissed her. 'I have had such a glorious dream. I was dreaming that you had written a book, and that the world was ringing with your name.'

"I interrupted her.

"'Perhaps that day is not far off, love. See, my story has been accepted, and the editor begs that I will send him some others.'

"She did not speak, but the proud look in her eyes told me what her thoughts were. Then she saw the lilies and she kissed me for them."

Robin covered his face with his hands, and a sob shook his frame. He rose from his chair and walked round the room. Then he stopped, and, with his face averted, he finished his story:

"In less than a week she was dead. She died in my arms. I thought she was better, but it was not to be. She was too good to live. We were too happy for this world. Heaven would have had no meaning could we have lived together longer. And when her last breath was gone I laid her back gently on the bed, and covered her face from my sight. I went on my knees and cursed—cursed my fate and everything else.

"Now, perhaps, you understand my fall. 'Why work,' I thought, 'when I have nobody to work for? My literary work was neglected. I lost my situation at the office, I have sunk deeper and deeper, until now,' he paused for awhile, "now I am 'Rambling Robin.'"

Then he came across and stood by the fire.

"But the innocent prattle of that little child of yours has brought me to my senses. As there is a God above, I will yet make the world ring with my name. Even if I cannot work for my dead Flora, I can work for her memory's sake. And so I will. I start to-night on the second part of my life. In two years I will let you know the result. I will come and see you. Good-by."

I pressed him to stop the night, but he would not. I persuaded him, however, to take the loan of a few pounds, and as he walked to the door I slipped a note into his hands.

And last Christmas Eve he kept his promise. He came to see me carrying a small parcel under his arm. It was a book—the book of the year. He had written it under a nom de plume. His name now is known throughout the English-speaking world, and the book which made his name is dedicated: "To my angel wife and Mabel."—Tit-Bits.

### Hot Stuff.

Wife—Now, deary, I made you these nice tarts with my ownie-ownie hands—and they are filled with something you are very, very fond of. I'm just crazy to see you eat one.

Husband (eyeing the tarts suspiciously)—How good of you, darling! And what are those lovely tarts filled with?

Wife (in great triumph)—Tobacco sauce.—Boston Traveler.

—The Phoenicians were the first to erect fortified cities on the Mediterranean sea.

## WOMAN AND HOME.

### THE SEWING ROOM.

Every Housekeeper Should Insist Upon Having One Arranged.

Have you a room which you keep especially for sewing? If you have not, I would advise you to arrange for one without delay, for it can be obtained at a very trifling cost, while the comfort it affords cannot be reckoned.

A large room is not needed for this purpose, and, in fact, a small one is more desirable; for in it all the appliances of work can be kept more easily at hand. Care should be taken, however, that the light is not obstructed by window hangings, and shades, arranged so that they can be raised to the full height of the window, are all the curtains necessary.

A low chair is best to sew in, and if it be a rocker, so much the better, while some people use their piazza chairs for this purpose during the winter months.

To hold up the arms while cutting, even for a short time, is extremely fatiguing, and for this reason the cutting table should be low, and should also be on casters, so that it can be moved at will.

The little cutting tables that are sold in the large dry goods stores are very convenient, for they have one edge marked off in inches, like a tape measure, and can be folded up and put away when the cutting is over.

Besides the sewing machine, the room should contain a scrap basket, a rag bag, a pattern bag, a chest of drawers, which can be made from an old bureau, and two or three footstools.

A small covered board, for pressing, is, of course, a necessity in this room, while a flatiron, an iron holder, and iron rest should accompany the board, and it is well to have an oil or gas stove in the room, so that the iron can be heated without frequent trips to the kitchen.

Of course, if you have an old discarded extension table, it will be found a valuable addition to the sewing-room, especially when cutting out large garments, because for this purpose you require a table at least three feet in width, and five feet or more in length.

If you find it necessary to employ a seamstress, to help out with the family sewing, she will fully appreciate this secluded nook, while as for busy "mamma," when she has a bit of important sewing which must be done, and she wishes to be free from domestic cares for awhile, in order to finish it, she will indeed hail this room as a welcome retreat.—N. Y. Weekly.

### PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

How to Obtain Good Results with the Popular Wax Plant.

One of the most satisfactory house plants is the Hoya carnosa, popularly known as the wax plant. Its large glossy leaves are very beautiful when sponged and kept free from dust. The buds of the Hoya form in the joint between the stem and the leaf one year before it blooms. The first sign of the bud is a little crooked stem, turned down, with a small head at the end that looks like a snake's head; the second year this head raises up and the buds expand, forming a cluster of five-sided waxen lumps, each on the end of a stem. When opened, a pretty five-pointed velvet star, bright as with dew, is a delight to the eye. When these



FLOWERING BRANCH OF WAX PLANT.

blossoms drop off, the little stump must be left on the vine, as the next year a similar bunch of buds will grow out of the center of the same stump. This plant is easily propagated from a well-matured leaf, but its growth is very slow, three years being required to form sufficient strength of vine to bear blossoms. It thrives in partial shade in a soil of turfy, sandy loam, and it must have good drainage. The matter of drainage is very important, as this plant does not like rotting or being disturbed in any way. The soil may be strengthened by removing some of the old portion and filling up the pot with fresh well-enriched earth.—American Agriculturist.

### Apple and Banana Salad.

When ready to serve, slice the apples and bananas. Mix well with a mayonnaise dressing, which can be prepared the day before, if necessary. Serve on the crisp, white leaves of lettuce. Do not allow this salad to stand long after preparing, as the apple and banana will both turn dark. The fruit should be placed in a very cold place in the early morning, as well as the lettuce, so that all may be crisp and cold.

### LATEST IN CUSHIONS.

Lovers of Fancy Work Have Many Alternatives to Choose From.

There was never a season when more novel and charming designs in the way of decorative art work invited the co-operation of clever fingers through the long and lovely lamp-lit hours of a winter's evening at home.

It has not been forgotten that, to men and women alike, anything new in the way of a pillow is always a decided acquisition. One of the most striking among many new designs for these luxurious necessities is a cushion covered in yellow satin, beautiful for the same reason that Japanese decorations are always so irresistible—the inexplicable charm of the fantastic; for over this glistening yellow surface are scattered merry little imps and dandies indulging in all sorts of antics; climbing ladders, jumping poles, etc. The process of making them is a very simple one. From a piece of canvas cut figures of the desired shape and size (those mentioned were perhaps a finger in length), haste on the satin and work in cross-stitch with black worsted; a dot of white and a line of red mark eye and mouth of these grotesque



A NEW SOFA PILLOW.

little figures. Finish with a double ruffle of black satin about a finger in width.

Still more elegant and costly are the creations in tapestry, which work is more in vogue than ever for the backs and seats of chairs, as well as for cushions. This autumn brings new importations rich in Watteau and Boucher figures exquisitely wrought in quarter-stitch, and though "filling in" is a somewhat tedious process the centuries have proved that in tapestry, at least, "a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

The pillow has, indeed, come to be one of the most important factors in solving the always difficult problem of what to give men friends; and the unique and pretty conceits in cigar ribbons have become so popular that the finest shops now keep a supply of the ribbons in stock. One can buy "Harvard," "Yale" and innumerable other brands—for it takes 100 strips to make one cushion—at three cents apiece. These are in all shades of yellow and orange, and are catstitched together with shaded yellow silk. The whole is finished with a fringe made of loops of narrow yellow ribbon about 4½ inches in length.

Special provision has also been made for the men of yachting propensities. On different colors (blue preferred) of heavy Bedford cord or denim a yacht in full sail cut out of white canvas is artistically applied. Fluffy little white clouds are embroidered above and swelling waves below.

There are many other new and artistic designs for both cushions and table spreads in denim and the more expensive corded goods, which, however, are not to be embroidered in the old way, but are outlined instead with a new carnation braid over-handed on. Sometimes a plain braid is used in combination with the carnation.—Chicago Record.

### Fad for Monogram Fans.

The monogram fan bids fair to become quite a fad. It is really a pretty fancy, and can be made into a much-prized souvenir. Get a fan with a plain, smooth back "body," and then besiege your friends and acquaintances with requests for their seals, crests, mottoes and monograms. Or you can cut these from notes and letters. Trim them carefully and paste them smoothly on the fan, taking care not to let them come in the "folds." The entire fan may be so carefully and evenly covered that the background will be hidden. Do your pasting carefully, and see how artistically you can arrange your trophies.

### Sending Money in Letters.

An old post office inspector says: "Money never should be inclosed in letters for transmission through the mails. In the first place, it is unnecessary to do so, because money orders are so cheap; and, in the second place, money in a letter offers a constant temptation to those who handle mail. It is practically impossible to place money in a letter so that the postal clerk into whose hands the letter falls will not instantly detect it. Paper money has a peculiar odor unlike anything else on earth, and the clerk who is dishonest uses his sense of smell in spotting valuable letters rather than the sense of touch."

### A Good Reason.

It is said that, on account of their depth and coldness, the waters of Lake Superior do not give up their dead. A recent traveler there asked the captain of a Lake Superior steamer why he carried life preservers, the water being so cold that one could not long survive immersion. "Oh," was the nonchalant reply, "we carry the corks so that it will be easier to recover the bodies!"—Argonaut.

### A TERRIBLE FATE.

Expedition of Englishman Wantonly Murdered in West Africa.

LONDON, Jan. 22.—A dispatch from Lagos, capital of the British West Africa colony of that name, gives the details of the massacre of the British expedition under Consul-General S. R. Phillips by the inhabitants of Benin City early during the present month. The party was unarmed and was proceeding to Benin City in order to make a request for a palaver, or conference, with King Obbeah. The nine officers were unarmed in order to impress the king with the peaceful character of their mission and over 200 native carriers were taken with the party to propel their canoes and carry presents intended for the king. After proceeding up the river the expedition landed at a spot about 15 miles from Benin City and the carriers were sent ahead through the dense jungle, the officers following. Five miles from Benin City the officers suddenly came upon a narrow defile which was filled with the dead carriers, who were fearfully mutilated. Almost immediately afterward the officers and their servants were surrounded and attacked by hundreds of savages armed with guns, cutlasses, spears and clubs and in a few minutes all the members of the party excepting Boisragon and Locke were killed. Of the 250 carriers only one escaped.

### JUST LIKE BLUE CUT.

Twice Within a Month a Southern Railway Train Is Robbed in Alabama.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Jan. 22.—For the second time within a month three unknown masked men last night held up train No. 35 of the Southern railway near Berry station, 70 miles west of Birmingham, and robbed the Western Express Co.'s car. The scene of the robbery was within a mile of the others, and they were almost identical in every detail. When the train reached a secluded spot near North river, three miles from Berry, it was halted and the express car doors were broken open and pistols thrust into the express messenger's face. His safe keys were secured and the local safe quickly opened and rifled of its contents, which the express officials say amounted to \$150. There is no doubt in the minds of the express and railroad officials that both robberies were committed by the same parties, and that the robbers reside in the mountains near the scene, which is the old stamping grounds of the once famous Burrows gang of train robbers.

### OKLAHOMA FRAUDS.

Three Men and Their Wives in Collision to Defraud Uncle Sam.

PERRY, Ok., Jan. 22.—Frauds have been brought to light in the United States land office here by the arrest of John Hulka and Savannah Hulka, living north of here, which implicate three men and their wives. Hulka is the owner of a fine body of land in Oklahoma, which prevented him taking government land; so, just before the opening of the strip he sued his wife for divorce and she took land on Red Rock creek. They live together now, although not wedded, so that each can hold land. Both were arrested for adultery. Another case has been brought to light at Morrison, where Joe Dunham was divorced from his wife for the same purpose; also John Prucha, on Black Bear creek.

### LIKE THE KANSAS WAR.

Oregon Legislature Is Proceeding on the Double-Barreled Plan.

SALEM, Ore., Jan. 22.—As an outcome of the fight for United States senator there were two different organizations of the house in the same hall. The Benson men, supporters of Senator Mitchell, organized a rump assembly with 33 members present. Smith, of Marion, took the place of temporary speaker, beside Davis, previously chosen to that office. Chief Justice Moore swore the members in and permanent organization was effected by electing H. I. Benson speaker.

### Big Failure in St. Louis.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 22.—The Dodson-Hills Manufacturing Co. has filed a chattel mortgage for \$87,000 to secure creditors and the firm is in the hands of a trustee. The assets of the company are estimated at over \$100,000, consisting of plants in Iowa and Missouri, and \$50,000 in outstanding accounts. It was one of the largest concerns of the kind in the west.

### Spread of Small-Pox in Havana.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22.—Gen. Wyman yesterday received a telegram from Havana that shows a startling condition of affairs in that city. It states that there are 4,000 cases of small-pox among the residents of that city. This condition, the general stated, is due to the lax quarantine system in force in Havana.

### Archbishop Sued for Slander.

MILWAUKEE, Jan. 22.—Father Hellstern, a deposed priest of St. Mary's Catholic church at Barton, Wis., has filed suit for \$50,000 for alleged slander against Archbishop Kalzer of the diocese of Milwaukee. The proceeding is without precedent and if a compromise is effected it must first be sanctioned by the pope.

### Photographed Government Currency.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 22.—Judge Phillips, of the United States district court, yesterday sentenced Ralph Creece to three years in the Missouri penitentiary and Dr. Adella Walters to 30 months. They were convicted of complicity in a scheme to photograph government currency.